

FINAL

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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date entered

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Weller House
and/or common The Old Prison Farm

2. Location

street & number 1200 North Road, 5 miles east of Chesterton N/A not for publication
city, town Chesterton vicinity of _____ congressional district Second
state Indiana code 018 county Porter code 127

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Unoccupied

4. Owner of Property

name Joseph and Sandra Gersna
street & number R. 1, Box 449 — 1159 N. 250 E
city, town Chesterton N/A vicinity of _____ state Indiana 46304

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder
street & number Porter County Courthouse
city, town Valparaiso state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date _____ federal state county local
depository for survey records _____
city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Weller House is located on a 4.1 acre plot on the Old Burdick Road, five miles east of Chesterton. The plot contains a milk house and woodshed due north of the house. A large barn is located farther north. Northeast of the house is a brick dormitory and a chicken coop. The Weller House, situated on a high knoll in the southeastern section of the plot, has its main entrance on the south side facing Burdick Road.

The two story, frame, Italianate structure is believed to have been built c. 1870. The plan of the house is rectangular, consisting of a middle section flanked by projecting wings. An additional wing has been added to the east section of the house. The house is covered by a hipped roof which is characteristic of the Italianate style. Outstanding characteristics of the house include the details of the main entrance portico, round-cornered window frames and sashes, and the arched hood moldings surmounting nearly every window of the structure.

The foundation of the house is constructed of painted brick. The first floor of the south elevation contains a main entrance, to the east of a pair of windows. The double, glazed doors are covered by a small canopy, supported by large, elaborately carved brackets which are accented by pendants. Paired windows to the west of the door are of one-over-one configuration and are doublehung sash. A wooden sill and a single, straight window hood with curved corners, corbel stops and central keystone design embrace the pair of windows.

Immediately above these windows is an identical pair of windows on the second floor. To the east of this window, above the door, is a single, one-over-one, doublehung sash window with hood molding. A plain, wide frieze with pairs of brackets accentuates the eaves of the hipped roof.

The west elevation is characterized by the same elements as the south: one-over-one doublehung sash windows, with decorative hood moldings aligned on the first and second stories; and eaves decorated by a wide frieze and double brackets.

The north elevation contains no surface penetrations at its western-most end. A brick chimney begins at the foundation of the house and extends well beyond the roof. The chimney is painted from foundation to roof level. Above the level of the roof, however, the chimney is left unpainted. East of the chimney is a series of three windows on the first floor aligned with windows on the second floor. All windows are adorned with hood moldings.

A gable-roofed, enclosed entrance to the cellar is located in front of the central bay on the first floor of the north elevation. The wide frieze and brackets which surround the entire house are visible on the north side, as well. The north side of the east addition has a concrete foundation and concrete steps leading to a door. The one story, frame structure appears to have had a later porch which is now removed.

The east elevation of the house has fewer doors and windows penetrating its surfaces than the other elevations of the house. A single, glazed door surmounted by a one-light transom on the projecting wall is adorned by the characteristic hood molding. Above this doorway is a window with wooden sill and hood molding. A pair of windows on the ground floor of the wing, just east of the door, is located immediately south of the one story addition.

The gable-roofed addition to the east facade is penetrated by two doors on the south side and one door on the east side.

The roof of the house is made of asphalt shingles. In addition to the brick chimney at the rear of the house, there is a central chimney which extends through the center of the main section. This chimney pre-dates the one at the rear of the house.

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Continuation sheet Weller House

Item number 7, Description

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The interior of the house contains five principal rooms on the first floor and five on the second floor, with high ceilings throughout. There are deep, rounded moldings around the doors and windows. Each window has ornate, iron window locks. Over each door is a movable transom to improve air circulation between rooms. The main entrance hall has a beautiful open staircase with a 90° turn. A curved wall follows the line of the balustrade to the second floor.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1870 **Builder Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Weller House is significant because of its outstanding architectural detail, and remains as the best frame, rural house in northern Porter County of the Italianate mode.

Built in approximately 1870, the Weller House contains such outstanding architectural details as round-cornered window frames, sashes, and hood moldings which are made to simulate arches. The rope molding on the exterior corners of the house are of particular interest due to their infrequent occurrence in northwestern Indiana architecture. The use of double brackets under the eaves is unusual for this area, as well.

Since the recent destruction of two Italianate style houses in the vicinity, the Weller House is the only extant example of the Italianate style in the rural areas of northern Porter County. As a result, this house has become a unique architectural landmark.

In 1865 the land was purchased by Rosina Weller, and it was inherited by John C. and Charles E. Weller in 1880. The property was sold again to various purchasers in 1881, 1884, and 1900.

The 4.1 acre plot on which the Weller House is situated was purchased by the State Department of Corrections in 1931, and for 48 years was utilized by inmates to learn agricultural skills. This property was known as the Old Prison Farm. The farm contains agricultural outbuildings such as a barn, milk house and chicken coop, and a dormitory for the prisoners, as well.

However, these buildings have been omitted from the nomination due to their loss of integrity or relative newness.

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Significance

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History of Weller House or Old Prison Farm

Owner J. Walker

1857 Purchased by Thomas Frame For \$3,000.00

1862 Purchased by James Bradley

1865 Purchased by Rosina Weller for \$2,570.00 (160 Acres)

Bruce Zimmerman, Pioneer Title Company believes the house was built in this time span, between 1860 and 1875

1880 Property went to John C. & Charles E. Weller

1881 Sold to Nellie Boniwell

1884 Put in both Nellie and Albert Boniwell Name

1901 Sold to Clark R. Warren, Founder of Warren Clinic, M.C. IN.

1931 May 9, 1931, Sold to State, Made into Prison

Farm, Held for Forty Eight years.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Deed Records, Porter County Courthouse, Valparaiso, Indiana

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Westville Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	0	4	0	7	0	4	6	0	5	9	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification Commencing at the southwest corner of Section 36, Township 37 North, Range 5 West, being the point of beginning; thence North 0° 09 minutes, 17 seconds East along the West line of Section 36, 200'; thence South 88°, 46 minutes 13 seconds East parallel to the South line of Section 36, 140'; thence South 0°, 09 minutes, 17 seconds

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joseph Gersna & Ron Knight

organization Historical Preservation Society

date March, 1980

street & number

219/

telephone 926-4961 or 926-1491

city or town Porter County

state Indiana

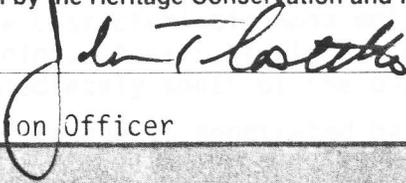
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3-8-82

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet The Weller House

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West parallel to the West line 200'; thence North 88°, 46 minutes, 13 seconds West along the South line of Section 36, 140' to the point of beginning.

3657 1/2 ACRES
(ROUND LINES)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

87°00'
41°37'30"

501.000m E.

503

57'30"

504

R. 5 W. (MICHIGAN)

460/7000m N

T. 37 N.

T. 36 N.

33

28

34

27

35

26

36

25

The Weller House
vic. of Chesterton, Indiana
UTM Reference:
16/504070/4605970

★
OLD PRISON FARM

